

ABSTRACT

THE TRINITARIAN ANALOGIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE TRANSMISSION OF TERMINOLOGY IN ARAB CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

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Introduction	455
1. Doctrinal Notion	456
2. Introductory Vocabulary	458
A. Timothy I (d. c. 823): <i>Disputation with al-Mahdī</i>	458
1. Question six	459
2. Question eight	460
B. Theodore Abū Qurra (d. c. 816).....	463
1. <i>Treatise on not three gods</i>	463
2. <i>Treatise on the existence of the Creator and the true religion</i>	466
C. Abū Rā'īṭa al-Takrītī (d. c. 830)	468
1. <i>The first Risāla: On the Holy Trinity</i>	468
2. <i>On the Proof of Christianity and the Trinity</i>	470
D. Buṭrus ibn Naṣṭas al-Bayt Ra's (d. c. 940): <i>The Book of the Demon-</i> <i>stration</i>	472
E. Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (893-974): <i>On the validity of the Christian belief</i> ...	475
F. 'Abdallah ibn al-Ṭayyib (d.1043): <i>Treatise on the Trinity and the</i> <i>Unity</i>	478
Conclusions	480
Bibliography	484

ABSTRACT¹

The importance of symbolical language consists not only in its simplicity and accessibility to the large audience of uneducated people. This paper deals with the Trinitarian analogies that were commonly used by the Arabic-speaking Christian theologians in the formative period of Christian theology in Arabic. The primary task of this research is to demonstrate the importance of symbolical language in Trinitarian theology and its theological terms, which are for the most part short metaphors that are easily learned. The terms contained in the analogies are presented in the context of the doctrinal notions to which they refer. The paper ends with a juxtaposition of the terms found in the analogies, divided into four categories: threeness, distinction, sameness, and oneness.

1) The following abbreviations are used in the article:

ABŪ QURRA, *al-Āb* = Theodore ABŪ QURRA, *Maymar yuhaqqiq annahu lā yulzamu l-Naṣārā an yaqūlū talāṭat āliha id yaqūlūna l-Āb ilāh wa-l-Ibn ilāh wa-Rūḥ al-Qudus (ilāh) wa-anna l-Āb wa-l-Ibn wa-Rūḥ al-Qudus ilāh wa-law kāna kull wāḥid minhum tāmm 'alā ḥidatihi*, in Constantin BACHA, *Mayāmir Tāwudūrus Abī Qurrah Usqf Harrān* (Maṭba'at al-fawā'id, Beirut, 1904), pp. 23-47.

ABŪ QURRA, *Maymar fī wuḡūd* = Theodore ABŪ QURRA, *Maymar fī wuḡūd al-Ḥaliq wa-l-dīn al-qawīm*, in Louis CHEIKHO, "«Maymar li-Tāurus Abī Qurrah fī wuḡūd al-Ḥaliq wa-l-dīn al-qawīm»", in *al-Maṣriq* 15 (1912), pp. 757-774, 825-842.

AWAD, *Orthodoxy* = Najib G. AWAD, *Orthodoxy in Arabic Terms. A Study of Theodore Abu Qurrah's Theology in its Islamic Context* (Walter de Gruyter, Boston - Berlin, 2015).

CASPAR, "Les versions arabes" = Robert CASPAR, "Les versions arabes du dialogue entre le Catholicos Timothée I et le Calife Al-Mahdī (IIe/IIIe siècle) «Mohammed a suivi la voie des prophètes»", in *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977), 107-175.

HADDAD, *La trinité* = Rachid HADDAD, *La trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes (750-1050)* (Beauchesne, Paris, 1985).

IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqāla fī ṣiḥḥat* = Yahyā IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqāla fī ṣiḥḥat i'tiqād al-Naṣārā fī l-Bārī 'azza wa-ḡalla annahu ḡawḥar wāḥid dū talāṭ ṣifāt*, in Augustin PÉRIER, *Petits traités apologétiques de Yahyā ben 'Adī* (J. Gabalda Éditeur, Paris, 1920), pp. 11-23.

IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fī l-taṭlīl* = IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fī l-taṭlīl*, in Gérard TROUPEAU, "Le traité sur l'unité et la trinité de 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib", in *ParOr* 2 (1971), pp. 71-89.

IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fī l-taṭlīl wa-l-tawḥīd* = IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fī l-taṭlīl wa-l-tawḥīd*, in Gérard TROUPEAU, "Traité du docte Abū l-Faraḡ 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib sur la Trinité et l'Unité", in *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 25 (1972), pp. 105-123.

ROGGEMA, "Ḥikāyāt" = Barbara ROGGEMA, "Ḥikāyāt amṭāl wa asmār...King Parables in Melkite Apologetic Literature", in Rifāat EBIED & Herman TEULE, *Studies in the Christian Arabic Heritage in Honour of Father Prof. Dr. Samir Khalil Samir at the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Peeters, Leuven - Paris - Dudley, 2004), pp. 113-131.

TIMOTHY I, *Al-muḥāwarah* = TIMOTHY I, *Al-muḥāwarah al-dīniyya allatī ḡarat bayna l-ḥaliḥ al-Mahdī wa Ṭimāṭāwus al-ḡāṭliq*, in Robert CASPAR, "Les versions arabes du dialogue entre le Catholicos Timothée I et le Calife Al-Mahdī (IIe/IIIe siècle) «Mohammed a suivi la voie des prophètes»", in *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977), pp. 125-152.

INTRODUCTION

Austin Farrer, in his book *Finite and Infinite*, observed that "the revelation has to be thought about to be received, and can be thought about only by the aid of words or finite images; and these cannot signify of God unless the appropriate 'mode of signification' functions in our minds"². The reception of revelation requires it to become "comprehensible" or "readable" for human mind. In symbolical theology, the images used are not only limited illustrations of the mysterious realities that they represent, but, unlike "theological definitions", they offer more space to "contain" the Uncontainable. The images that Farrer speaks about are represented by numerous Trinitarian analogies present in the writings of the Arab Christian theologians. They widely used these simple examples, taken from daily life and human experience, in order to make the aspects of their faith understandable.

The study of the analogies in the Arab Christian theological legacy has not received much attention. This is attested by the small number of the secondary studies dedicated to the matter. More than two decades ago, the Swedish orientalist, Bo Holmberg, wrote an article dealing with the concept of analogy in the Arab Christian thought. Regarding the secondary studies on the analogies used in Christian tradition, there is an interesting work by Harry Austryn Wolfson on the philosophy of the Church Fathers, in which the author also deals with the Trinitarian analogies in both Greek and Latin texts. An important work concerning the Arab Christian theological legacy, and the Trinitarian analogies in particular, was written by Rachid Haddad; and the relatively recent publication in this area of studies by Barbara Roggema³.

The aim of this paper is not to analyze the analogies with respect to their appropriateness but to answer the question concerning the role that the Trinitarian analogies played in the transmission of the theological terminology used for the Trinity. Some metaphors were used not only to illustrate the

2) Austin FARRER, *Finite and Infinite* (Dacre Press, London, Mcmillan, New York, 1966), p. 2.

3) See Bo HOLMBERG, "The Concept of Analogy in Christian Arabic Thought", in Reijo TRYÖRINOJA & Anja Inkeri LEHTINEN & Dagfinn FØLLESDAL, *Knowledge and the Sciences in Medieval Philosophy. Proceedings of the Eight International Congress of Medieval Philosophy (S.I.E.P.M)* (Acta philosophica Fennica, Helsingfors, 1990), pp. 399-400; Harry Austryn WOLFSON, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1956); Rachid HADDAD, *La trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes (750-1050)* (Beauchesne, Paris, 1985); Barbara ROGHEMA, "Ḥikāyāt amāl wa asmār... King Parables in Melkite Apologetic Literature", in Rifaat EBIED & Herman TEULE, *Studies in the Christian Arabic Heritage in Honour of Father Prof. Dr. Samir Khalil Samir at the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Peeters, Leuven - Paris - Dudley, 2004), pp. 113-131.

belief in the Triune God, but they also contained expressions to familiarize the readers and listeners with the terms necessary for a proper theological discourse. Since symbolical language seems to have been very important for the Eastern Christians, I assume that the analogies could be used to diffuse the terminology in Arabic, which at that time was in its formative stage⁴. Over time, the role played by analogies in theological discourse was changing. It is worth noting that, along with the variability of that role, their structure was also subject to change.

Here, I will present twelve analogies, composed by six authors from the three major Christian denominations of the Near East. The texts were written between the middle of the 9th and the 11th centuries. Eleven analogies will be cited *in extenso*, along with their doctrinal notion; as to the twelfth analogy, because of its length, it will be only described. This paper will end with a juxtaposition of the theological terminology that appears in the analogies of the Trinity and some conclusions.

In my research, I found puzzling what analogy really is with respect to its textual context. Although most are concise expressions, contained in one or two phrases, others, on the contrary, have a more complex structure. Logically, these analogies, if limited only to their metaphorical dimension, would sometimes be incomprehensible outside of their doctrinal notion or theological setting. Therefore, I find it justified to read each analogy within its context. Moreover, we can also notice how analogies are integrated into the doctrinal discourse they concern. Most of them are linked to the doctrinal notion by means of special vocabulary that puts them into relation with the doctrinal teaching and expresses their imperfect, metaphorical character.

1. DOCTRINAL NOTION

The very nature of analogy requires it to be related to a reality that it is intended to visualize. In theological treatises of Arab Christian authors, the analogies are usually either preceded or followed by the exposition of the doctrine. This *locus* is a doctrinal notion that plays the role of a logical placement for most of the analogies presented in this paper. Usually the doctrinal notion highlights certain features of presented doctrine and determines the use of a particular analogy. Given that it is present in most of the meta-

4) Cf. Sebastian BROCK, "The Christology of the Church of the East", in Sebastian BROCK, *Fire from Heaven. Studies in Syriac Theology and Liturgy* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2006), III, p. 165.

phors on the Trinity, one may infer that, in many cases, the doctrinal notion is an inseparable part of (some) analogies.

Regarding the variety of concepts, we can recognize the following schemes of the (N)otion - (A)nalogy relation in the writings of the following authors:

- a) Timothy I: N-A-N-A and N-A-A-N⁵,
- b) Abū Qurra: A-N⁶, A N⁷, and N-A-N⁸,
- c) Eutychius of Alexandria: (N-) A⁹,
- d) Abū Rā'īṭa: N-A¹⁰,
- e) Ibn 'Adī: (N-)A-N¹¹,
- f) Ibn al-Ṭayyib: (N-)A¹².

Generally, these schemes may be reduced to the following ones:

- a) N-A, and more complex:
- b) N-A-A-N,
- c) N-A-N-A, and isolated:
- d) (N-) A.

The doctrinal notions are always related to analogies (sometimes vice versa) by means of vocabulary¹³. This vocabulary plays an important role as a "bridge" that, on the one hand, connects an analogy to specific theological content and, also on the other, extends its presence in a simile, while outlining the analogy's textual limits. Analogies that are placed between the two doctrinal notions gain a higher sense of validity. The table below depicts how this particular vocabulary is used.

5) TIMOTHY I, *Al-muḥāwarah*, pp. 129, 130-131.

6) Cf. ABŪ QURRA, *al-Āb*, p. 34.

7) ABŪ QURRA, *al-Āb*, p. 36.

8) Cf. ABŪ QURRA, *Maymar fī wuḡūd*, pp. 224-225.

9) The analogy of the Sun presented by Pseudo-Eutychius (Būtrus ibn Naṣṭas al-Bayt Ra's) is not preceded by typical, short doctrinal notion but rather placed in a long doctrinal explanation. EUTYCHIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, *Kitāb al-Burhān*, in Pierre CACHIA (ed.), *Eutychius of Alexandria - The Book of the Demonstration (Kitāb al-Burhān)*, CSCO, vol. 192, *Scriptores Arabici*, vol. 20 (Secrétariat du CSCO, Louvain, 1960), part I, pp. 33-34 (n. 47).

10) Cf. Ḥabīb ABŪ RĀ'ĪṬA, *The first Risāla: On the Holy Trinity*, in Sandra Toenies KEATING, *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Islamic Period. The Apologies of Abū Rā'īṭa* (Brill, Leiden, 2006), pp. 185-187; Ḥabīb ABŪ RĀ'ĪṬA, *Risāla fī ṭibāt dīn al-naṣraniyya wa-ṭibāt al-Ṭālib al-muqaddas*, in Sandra Toenies KEATING, *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Islamic Period. The Apologies of Abū Rā'īṭa* (Brill, Leiden, 2006), p. 112.

11) IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqāla fī ṣiḥḥat*, pp. 12-14.

12) IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fī l-taḥlīl wa-l-tawḥīd*, p. 109.

13) Cf. ROGEMA, "Ḥikāyāt", p. 122.

2. INTRODUCTORY VOCABULARY

The table below contains the introductory vocabulary that is found in the most of Trinitarian analogies presented in this paper. To begin, the apologists tend to use the following words: كذلك (likewise), كما (as, just as), ك (as, like), as well as يشبه (this is like), بمنزلة (at the rank of, equal to), and ومثل (likeness, metaphor). As for the expressions used alternatively to refer back to the doctrinal notion, the following may be listed: أيضاً (also), مماثل (resembling, similar, comparable).

Author	Analogy	
	opens with	closes with
Timothy I	كما وكذلك ك كما	كذلك — — كذلك
Abū Qurra	— — كذلك، يشبه	كذلك — أيضاً
Abū Rā'iṭa	بمنزلة ك	— —
Ḥuṭrus ibn Naṣṭas al-Bayṭ Ra's	—	—
Ibn 'Adī	—	مماثل
Ibn al-Ṭayyib	ومثل ذلك	—

Table 1. Introductory vocabulary

In the following sections, the selected Trinitarian analogies will be briefly characterized and their text and theological terminology presented.

A. TIMOTHY I (D. C. 823): *Disputation with al-Mahdī*

Timothy I's disputation with the Caliph al-Mahdī was originally in Arabic, but its oldest written version is preserved in Syriac¹⁴. Among the many

14) Cf. GCAL 133 (1947), 35:2; Martin HEIMGARTNER, "Timothy I: Letter 59", in David THOMAS, Barbara ROGGEMA (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History* (Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2009), vol. I, p. 522.

topics discussed in the dialogue, the teaching on the Trinity also appears¹⁵. Short questions asked by the Caliph along with the compact answers given by Timothy outline the Trinitarian faith. In his exposition of faith, Timothy uses some analogies to illustrate his belief. These analogies are important because they contain theological terminology. Timothy's teaching on the Trinity is based on a conception of God's oneness, and on his denial to consider the three divine hypostases as three gods. In this context, he uses two analogies: the analogy of the commander and that of the Sun. These analogies are preceded by an explanation that deals with two important terms, i.e., أقانيم and أسماء.

1) QUESTION SIX

The names (الأسماء) [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] indicate, among us, the hypostases (أقانيم) of the one God (إله واحد). Just as (كما) the Commander of the Faithful (أمير المؤمنين), his word (كلمته) and his spirit (وروحه) are one being and not three caliphs - your word and your spirit not separated from you -, God, together with his Word and his Spirit, is one God and not three gods, because his Word and his Spirit are not separated from him (لأنه لا انفصال لكلمته وروحه منه). Just as (وكذلك) the sun (الشمس), with its rays and its heat (مع الشمس وحرارتها), is one sun and not three suns¹⁶.

The two analogies used by Timothy in question six of his disputation deliver a noteworthy information concerning the theological terminology. In this passage, there are three terms that play an important role in the Trinitarian theology. The explanation opens with two other important words: أسماء (names)¹⁷ and أقانيم (hypostases)¹⁸. Timothy associates these two terms with one another and suggests that they are synonymous¹⁹.

15) For our purposes, we will use the Arabic version of that text. Caspar's edition: CASPAR, "Les versions arabes", pp. 129-131 (Arabic).

16) TIMOTHY I, *Al-muhāwarah*, p. 129.

17) The term corresponds to the Greek ὑπόστασις used in the Cappadocian doctrine of the Trinity and is a transcription of Syriac word ܡܬܚܝܬܐ. The most common term, used by the majority of the Arab Christian writers, was without a doubt the Arabic أقنوم or قنوم, plural: أقانيم. For more on the relation between ܡܬܚܝܬܐ and قنوم see BO HOLMBERG, "«Person» in the Trinitarian Doctrine of Christian Arabic Apologetics and its Background in the Syriac Fathers", *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993), 300-301; AWAD, *Orthodoxy*, pp. 140-150.

18) With respect to Muslim theology, Richard Frank notes that the questions relating to the very nature of God are reflected in the Qur'an by names (أسماء) and attributes (صفات). Cf. RICHARD FRANK, *Beings and their Attributes. The Teaching of the Basrian School of the Mu'tazila in the Classical Period* (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1978), pp. 10-11.

19) Ephrem the Syrian, in his teaching on the three divine Persons, often employs the

²⁰ The analogy illustrates that the multiplicity of the hypostases does not contradict God's oneness, because the divine اقانيم are not separated (لا انفصال).²⁰ The inseparable character of the three اقانيم is absolute, as depicted, on the one hand, by commander's word and spirit and, on the other, by the heat and the rays of the Sun. As for the structure of this text, both analogies constitute an undivided whole, related with one another and logically connected with the theological setting, that not only plays an introductory role, but also helps to relate one analogy to the other.

2) QUESTION EIGHT

Question eight of the dialogue continues the exposition begun in the question six. This part focuses on the unity and the distinction that characterize the divine hypostases. The three divine اقانيم are represented here by the triad Intellect-Word-Spirit. In the first part, it is said these elements differ from each other by their properties (بخاصته), which, however, do not separate them (لا انفصال) from the divine substance that they share. Next, in the second part of the text, presented below, Timothy further develops his teaching and refers to the doctrine of the procession of the divine hypostasis. This is supported by the triad, in which the Word is generated (مولود) by the Intellect and the Spirit proceeds (منبثق) from it.²¹ In this context, the analogies of the Sun and of the apple appear.

The Intellect, the Word and the Spirit (العقل والكلمة والروح), each different from the others (غير الآخر) by its particularity (بخاصته) are not separated (لا انفصال) from the divine substance (بالجوهر الإلهي). Thus the Word is begotten (مولود) by the Intellect and the Spirit proceeds (منبثق) from it, just as light is begotten (كمولد) by the sun and [as] emission (انبثاق) of heat from it.

Likewise, (كما) the scent of the apple is not [begotten] at a particular spot, but all of its scent emits (تنبعث) from the whole apple, and from it all of its flavour is begotten (ويتولد), without the scent and the flavour being separable (لا انفصالهما) and without either of them being separated (غير انفصال) from the apple. Yet, the scent is different (غير) from the flavor, both of them are different (غير) from the apple, and the three are connected while being dif-

term "three Names" (ثلاثة أسماء). Cf. EPHREM, *Hymnen de Fide*, 18:4; 23:14; 40:8; 59:5, in Edmund BECK (ed.), *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide*, CSCO vol. 155, *Scriptores Syri* vol. 73 (L. Durbecq, Louvain, 1955), pp. 70, 82, 132, 183.

²⁰ Timothy uses the same term to describe the relation found between Christ's two substances: وكذلك كلمة الله مع ناسوته وجه واحد بلا انفصال ولا امتزاج بين الجوهرين. Cf. TIMOTHY, *Al-muhāwarah*, p. 127.

²¹ TIMOTHY I, *Al-muhāwarah*, p. 130.

ferent and different while being one (متصلة بانفصال منفصلة باتصال). Thus, (كذلك) the Father, the Son and the Spirit are three hypostases (ثلاثة أقانيم) and one substance (جوهر واحد) with three necessary particularities (ثلاثة (خواص لازمة), one sole God possessing three essential and revealed attributes (ثلاث صفات ذاتية)²².

In the question eight, Timothy continues to deploy the Trinitarian terminology. The doctrinal introduction to the analogy of the apple not only repeats the terms found in the question six and its two analogies, but also introduces some new expressions. In the description of the triad Intellect-Word-Spirit, the term جوهر (substance)²³ appears, accompanied by the adjective إلهي. An important role is played here by the term "particularity" (خاصة), that makes the أقانيم distinct but does not separate (لا انفصال) them from the divine substance (جوهر إلهي). With respect to the internal relations found within the triad, certain words are used to reflect precisely two different ways of origin of the divine أقانيم, i.e. the Word who is begotten (مولود) and the Spirit who proceeds (منبثق). Interestingly, almost the same terms are used in the analogy of the Sun with respect to the origin of the solar rays (تولد) and heat (انبثاق).

The analogy of the apple repeats terms that have already been used (i.e. to generate: يتولد; to send: تنبعث; and separation: انفصال), and emphasizes the unity between the three elements of the analogy along with their simultaneous distinction. For this reason, Timothy uses a subtle expression that shows

22) TIMOTHY I, *Al-muḥāwarah*, pp. 130-131.

23) The term is already present in the beginning of the disputation, and Timothy uses it in his teaching on Christ born from Mary according to his "human substance" (بجوهره البشري) but not his "eternal substance" (لا بجوهره الأزلي). It seems that the Arabic term جوهر used by Timothy in the context of Christology should be rendered by the Syriac word ܡܫܝܚܐ, and understood in the sense of φύσις. For instance, Ephrem, in his teaching on the Trinity and Christology, uses the same term nature (ܡܫܝܚܐ). In the same way, the Assyrian synode of 612 AD speaks about "one divine nature" (ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ) of "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," and "a nature with three qnome" (ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ) with a simultaneous teaching on "a human nature" (ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ) of Christ. Cf. TIMOTHY, *Al-muḥāwarah*, p. 127; EPHREM, *Hymnen De Fide*, 7:1; 19:2; 32:16; 33:3; 41:10; 59:4, in Edmund BECK (ed.), *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide*, CSCO vol. 155, *Scriptores Syri* vol. 73 (L. Durbecq, Louvain, 1955), pp. 31, 72, 110, 135, 183; BABAI MAGNUS, *Liber De unione*, in Jean-Baptiste CHABOT, *Synodicon Orientale* (Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1902), pp. 564-565; ELIAS OF NISSIBIS, *Maqāla fī kalimatān kiyān wa-ilāh*, in Samir Khalil SAMIR, "Un traité nouveau d'Élie de Nisibe sur le sens des mots kiyān et ilāh", in *ParOr* 14 (1987), pp. 109-153; Sebastian BROCK, "The Christology of the Church of the East in the Synods of the Fifth to Early Seventh Centuries: Preliminary Considerations and Materials", in Sebastian BROCK (ed.), *Studies in Syriac Christianity. History, Literature and Theology* (Variorum, Hampshire, 1992), XII, p. 131.

These short expressions, which accurately describe the inter-Trinitarian relations, help to avoid theological misconceptions such as mutual separation of the hypostases²⁵. The two analogies are concluded and completed by the doctrinal statement about God. The three divine اسماء, called Father, Son, and Spirit, are the three اقانيم and one جوهر²⁶. The three اقانيم are one substance that is individualized by the necessary (لزمة) particularities (خواص). The author sums up his clarifications by introducing the three essential attributes (صفات ذاتية)²⁷, which he considers equivalent to the three اقانيم²⁸. This is

25) The root *f-s-i*. Edward W. LANE, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Williams and Norgate, London, 1877), Book I, Part 6, p. 2405: *à divoide, to separate, to put apart*; Albert KAZIMIRSKI DE BIBERSTEIN, *Dictionnaire arabe-français contenant toutes les racines de la langue arabe, leurs dérivés tant dans l'idiome vulgaire que dans l'idiome littéraire, ainsi que les dialectes d'Alger et de Maroc* (Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris, 1860), vol. II, p. 601: *séparer, disjoindre, détacher*. However, the meaning of انفصل *infassal* should be determined by the explicit notion انفصال *infassal* with respect to the elements of the analogies. The Syriac version of the disputation refers these words to the Trinity and describes this relation in a following way:

TIMOTHY I, *Disputation mit dem Kalifen al-Mahdī*, 4:57, in Martin HEIMGARTNER (ed.), *Timotheos I, Ostsyrischer Patriarch: Disputation mit dem Kalifen al-Mahdī*, CSCO, vol. 631, *Scriptores Syri*, vol. 244 (In Aedibus Peeters, Lovanii, 2011), p. 25.

27) In the Syriac version of the disputation, Timothy speaks about the three personal attributes (ܡܫܬܬܬܐ ܡܫܬܬܬܐ ܡܫܬܬܬܐ) and the three attributes of the nature of God (ܡܫܬܬܬܐ ܡܫܬܬܬܐ ܡܫܬܬܬܐ). Cf. TIMOTHY I, *Disputation mit dem Kalifen al-Mahdī*, 17:16, in MARTIN HEIMGARTNER (ed.), *Timotheos I., Ostsyrischer Patriarch: Disputation mit dem Kalifen al-Mahdī*, CSCO vol. 631, Scriptores Syri vol. 244 (In Aedibus Peeters, Lovanii, 2011), pp. 122-123. Related study: MARK SWANSON, "Are Hypostases attributes?", in *ParOr* 16 (1990-1991), pp. 239-250; SIDNEY GRIFFITH, "The concept of al-uqūn in 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's Apology for the Doctrine of the Trinity", in SAMIR KHALIL SAMIR (ed.), *Actes du premier congrès international d'études arabes chrétiennes* (OCA 218) (Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Roma, 1982), pp. 169-191.

28) Cf. TIMOTHY I, *Al-muḥāwarah*, pp. 130-131.

probably an invention introduced by the text's translator, since the Syriac version of the disputation deals with the three "personal attributes." It may suggest, in turn, that the Arabic version of the text had been modified in the context of Muslim theology, along with its teaching on the essential attributes.

This short fragment of Timothy's disputation with al-Mahdī uses seven theological terms. Although some of them (like *ذات*, *جوهر*, *صفة*) appear in other parts of the dialogue²⁹, those used in the context of the exposition of the Trinity are linked with analogies that contain numerous theological terms. Timothy's parables describe God in the aspect of his trinity, i.e. multiplicity of *صفات*, *اقانيم*, and *خواص*, unicity of his *جوهر* and *ذات*, while also dealing with the hypostases' relational aspect, reflected in their procession, which is rendered by such terms like: *منشئ* and *مولود*.

B. THEODORE ABŪ QURRA (D. C. 816)

The second author to be presented is Theodore Abū Qurra, a Melkite bishop of Harrān. In his teaching, the analogies played an important role. They are found in theological treatises, and most of them deal with the problem of the oneness of the divine nature, in the aspect of the uncounted character of its number as well as the issue concerning the number of operating subjects.

1) TREATISE ON NOT THREE GODS³⁰

In the set of his analogies³¹, we find an interesting and common example of Peter, James, and John and the three reciting men. The former analogy is placed in a section that deals with the number of names that refer to the nature of things.

If you want to count Peter, James, and John: three persons (*وجوه ثلاثة*) with one single nature (*لها طبيعة واحدة*), that of man (*وطبيعتهم الإنسان*), it is incorrect

29) Cf. TIMOTHY I, *Al-muḥāwarah*, pp. 125-127.

30) The full title in English is: *Treatise confirming that Christians do not necessarily speak of three gods when they say that the Father is God and the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, even though each of them is fully God*. JOHN C. LAMOREUX, "Theodore Abū Qurra", in DAVID THOMAS & BARBARA ROGGEA (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History* (Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2009), vol. I, p. 453.

31) Abū Qurra uses the following analogies to picture the Trinity: Peter, Paul, and John; three lamps; three reciting men; three pieces of gold; prophet Moses; Sun; three mirrors; three pictures; spouses; Adam, Eve and Son.

to predicate the number of man, i.e. their nature, and say that there are the three mans. If you do, you make their single nature, to which the name "man" refers, into different natures and do something foolish. In the same way (كذلك), the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the three persons (ثلاثة وجوه) with one nature (لها طبيعة واحدة), that of God (هي اله).³²

Again, imagine that three men stand and recite a poem together and that you are outside listening. You hear only a single poem, but you do not doubt that each of them recited the complete poem, nor could you say *I heard three poems*. This is the case even if in the voices of the men there is a difference. As for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, there is no difference (لا اختلاف) among them at all, no difference that has an effect on the hypostasis (قنوم) of one of them - other than that each is different from the other (غير صاحبه). Indeed, it is even more appropriate that they be one God, even if each is fully God.³³

These two analogies were chosen among the ten found in two of Abū Qurra's theological treatises: *The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God*³⁴ and *Treatise on the Existence of the Creator and the True Religion*³⁵. Abū Qurra chooses to apply his own terminology, which is primarily based on the Greek theological tradition. In the text quoted above, the author describes Peter, James, and John as وجوه ثلاثة, united in their common nature (طبيعة واحدة). Then, as in the analogy, these terms are used in an expression that directly deals with God.

32) ABŪ QURRA, *al-Āb*, p. 34. English translation: THEODORE ABŪ QURRA, *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God*, in John C. LAMOREUX, *Theodore Abū Qurrah* (Brigham Young University Press, Provo, 2005), p. 183.

33) ABŪ QURRA, *al-Āb*, p. 36. English translation: THEODORE ABŪ QURRA, *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God*, in John C. LAMOREUX, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, p. 185.

34) ABŪ QURRA, *al-Āb*, pp. 23-47; English translation: THEODORE ABŪ QURRA, *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God*, in John C. LAMOREUX, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, pp. 165-193.

35) ABŪ QURRA, *Maymar fi wuḡūd*, pp. 757-774, 825-842; Georg GRAF, *Des Theodor Abu Qurra Traktat über den Schöpfer und die wahre Religion* (Aschendorff, Münster in Westfalen, 1913); Ignace DICK, *Théodore Abuqurra. Traité de l'Existence du Créateur et de la vraie religion* (Librairie Saint-Paul, Jounieh, 1982); Ignace DICK, "Le traité de Théodore Abū Qurra et de l'existence du Créateur et de la vraie religion", in Samir Khalil SAMIR (ed.), *Actes du premier congrès international d'études arabes chrétiennes* (OCA 218) (Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Roma, 1982), pp. 149-168; English translation: THEODORE ABŪ QURRA, *Treatise on the Existence of the Creator and the True Religion*, in John C. LAMOREUX, *Theodore Abū Qurrah* (Brigham Young University Press, Provo, 2005), pp. 1-26.

Both ³⁶طبيعة and ³⁷وجه occur for the first time in the Trinitarian teaching presented so far. The Arabic term ³⁷وجه (face, countenance), calque of the Greek πρόσωπον (mask, person), is widely used by Abū Qurra in his treatises to speak about the three divine persons (³⁸ثلاثة وجوه). However, it is also later found in his analogy of the three mirrors³⁹; but there the term refers only to the human face. His choice to use ³⁷وجه in his discourse was probably based on practical reasons, since the word was familiar to his Arabic speaking Muslim interlocutors.

As shown in the second analogy, ³⁷وجه is not the only term Abū Qurra uses to describe the Trinity. In the second text above, i.e. the analogy of the three reciting men, the author wants to show that there is no difference between the divine persons. Then, here, Theodore prefers to use a term of Syriac origin: ⁴⁰قنوم (hypostasis), which in many places appears in forms such as sing. اقنوم or pl. اقنوم.

To describe the common deity of the divine persons, he insists on using the Arabic word ⁴¹طبيعة (nature), which directly traces back to the Greek φύσις⁴¹. The term is found in the analogies and throughout Abū Qurra's teaching in this work as a synonym for ⁴²جوهر. The three ³⁷وجه and the one ⁴³اله are God. A complementary specification concerning the proper

36) It is worth noting that the word ³⁷وجه appears as early as in the oldest-known theological text in Arabic, the MS Sinai Arab 154, but there it is used simply in a context of a human person in the analogy of Soul-Body-Spirit. Cf. ANONYMOUS AUTHOR, *Fī taqlīḡ Allāh al-wāḥid*, in Margaret Dunlop GIBSON, *An Arabic Version of the Acts of the Apostles and the Seven Catholic Epistles from an Eighth or Ninth Century Ms. in the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai: with a Treatise on the Triune Nature of God, with translation from the same codex* (Studia Sinaitica, 7) (C. J. Clay and Son, London, 1889), p. 76.

37) In Arab Christian theological literature, different forms of that word are found, for instance: *ṭab'* or *ṭibā'*. Cf. HADDAD, *La trinité*, pp. 162-163.

38) ABŪ QURRA, *al-Āb*, p. 35. Cf. HADDAD, *La trinité*, p. 172; AWAD, *Orthodoxy*, pp. 212-228.

39) ABŪ QURRA, *al-Āb*, p. 43.

40) See also: ABŪ QURRA, *al-ĀB*, pp. 27, 39, 40, 42, and 44.

41) See: ABŪ QURRA, *al-ĀB*, pp. 39, 42, 44, and 46.

42) It is evident when he is speaking about the refinement of the divine substance. Cf. ABŪ QURRA, *al-ĀB*, p. 38.

43) The hypostasis is eternal, like the divine substance, and it is characterized by the individuating differences (ἰδίως διαφοραὶ χαρακτηριστικαί), which are also called essential properties (خاصة ذاتية). THEODORE ABŪ QURRA, *De unione et incarnatione*, in PG 97, 1605A; Theodore ABŪ QURRA, *Maymar yuḥaqqiqu anna dīn Allāh alladī ya'ḥuḍu Allāh bihi l-'ibād yawm al-qiyāma wa-lā yaqbalu minhum dīnan ḡayrahu wa-huwa l-dīn alladī ḥaraḡat bihi l-ḥawāriyyūn ilā aqṭar al-arḍ wa-ḡamī' umam al-dunyā wa-huwa rusul al-Masīḥ rabbīnā*, in Ignace DICK, "Deux écrits inédits de Théodore Abuqurra", *Le Muséon* 72 (1959), p. 56.

description of the intra-Trinitarian relations appears in the second analogy. Together with the positive statements Abū Qurra makes about the nature of the divine persons, he also describes them negatively, pointing out to their *distinctio*. Each of the hypostases is other (غير), but there is no difference between them (لا اختلاف). Their individual "otherness" does not contradict their substantial "sameness".

2) TREATISE ON THE EXISTENCE OF THE CREATOR AND THE TRUE RELIGION

In his *Treatise on the Existence of the Creator and the True Religion*⁴⁴, Theodore attempts to justify the use of cataphatic theology in speaking about God. He maintains that the description of God through analogy is possible, and the best example of this is human nature itself. Abū Qurra invokes the belief that man is created on God's image and likeness. This truth leads him to the beginning of human history as presented in the Bible: Adam resembles God in virtues of his nature, but God is transcendent to human existence (الوجود), life (الحياة), and knowledge (العلم)⁴⁵.

The analogy of Adam, Eve, and their son cannot be reduced only to a short text. Rather this analogy is incorporated and appears several times in a long exposition of the man's likeness with God. However, Abū Qurra cites also a concise comparison of these two realities:

In a similar way (كذلك) [...] we see (لأننا رأينا) that something resembling Adam in nature (في الطبيعة) was begotten and proceeded from him (يُشبهه). We see, too, that he is the head over this one who is like him. (وُلدَ وانبثق منه). Since Adam begets (والداً) and is head (ورئيساً) over one who is from him, he who caused him to beget (والداً) and to be head must surely himself beget (والد) and be head over the one who resembles him. Nonetheless, this is so in a transcendent and contrary manner. Adam's begetting (ولادة) of a son took place through a woman, intercourse and upbringing. So too, Eve proceeded from him (وانبثق منه) as bone of his bone, through a decrease of his body. Further, Adam preceded both his son and Eve in time. Moreover, though he is head over them and they share a common nature, their wills do not wholly agree with his.

God's begetting of his Son (ولادة الله ابنه منه) and the procession of the Holy Spirit (وانبثق روح قدسه), however, transcends and are contrary to this⁴⁶. They do not take place through a woman or sex. They involved neither

44) ABŪ QURRA, *Maymar fī wuḡūd*, pp. 219-240.

45) Cf. ABŪ QURRA, *Maymar fī wuḡūd*, p. 223.

46) Cf. IOHANNES DAMASCENUS, *Expositio fidei*, 1:8, in PG 94, 820A.

pregnancy nor development. There was no question of temporal precedence, only simultaneity. So too, God's headship (رئاسته) over those who are from him (على أيضا الذين منه) involves no disagreement (ليست مخالفة). Rather, those two agree with him in nature (في الطبيعة), will (المشيئة), eternity (الأزلية), and desire (الموى). Among them, there is absolutely no disagreement (ليس بينهم تخلاف شيء البتة), excepting that one begot (إلا أن هذا والد), another was begotten (وذلك مولود), and another proceeded (والآخر منبثق), while the one who begot is head (والوالد منهم رئيس)⁴⁷.

This text, based on the biblical anthropogenesis, was used by various theologians to represent the intra-Trinitarian relations⁴⁸. It goes without saying that the description concerns the most fundamental theological questions about the *raison d'être* of each hypostasis. The analogy also differs from the other texts presented here, since it does not deal explicitly with such a common issue as the oneness of nature (or substance) and the threeness of the hypostases (or persons) of the Trinity. The difference found in the origin of Adam, Eve and their son reflects the Christian teaching on the *distinctio personarum* within the Trinity and also demonstrates the *why* of their oneness.

As shown in the text above, Abū Qurra compares the parallel realities: Adam is characterized by what is "coarse", while God is characterized by what is refined and transcendent. Adam resembles God (the Father) not only in his virtues but also in origin and headship. Here, Abū Qurra distinguishes two kinds of origin, proper for both Eve and her son. According to the biblical account, Adam is the cause of existence in the order of nature (في الطبيعة): he begets (والداً) his son, and becomes his head (رئيساً), while Eve is said to have procession from Adam (وانبثاق منه) on the way of decrease. This particular human generation and the procession are affected by imperfection and various differences (time, space, upbringing, disagreement of will, etc.), but

47) ABŪ QURRA, *Maymar fī wujūd*, p. 224-225. English translation: THEODORE ABŪ QURRA, *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God*, in John C. LAMOREUX, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, p. 12.

48) See ORIGENES, *De Principiis*, I, 2, 6, in PG 11, 134C; GREGORIUS NAZIANZENUS, *Orationes*, 31:11, in PG 36, 144D-145B; CYRILLUS ALEXANDRINUS, *De Sancta Trinitate*, 8, in PG 77, 1136D; THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA, *Controverse avec les Macédoniens*, in Francis NAU, "Théodore de Mopsueste: Controverse avec les Macédoniens", PO 9 (1913), pp. 657-658; NARSAI, *Homélie sur la constitution de la création et sur les personnes de la Trinité*, in Philippe GIGNOUX (ed.), *Homélie sur la Création. Édition critique du texte syriaque, introduction et traduction française*, in PO 34, 3-4 (1968), p. 589; IOHANNES DAMASCENUS, *Expositio fidei*, 7, in PG 94, 816C-817A.

the origin of the divine persons (وجوه)⁴⁹ is not to be understood in the same way. The three divine persons are equal in nature, will, eternity, and desire; and there is no disagreement among them (ليس بينهم خلاف شيء البتة).

Through this analogy, Abū Qurra strongly highlights the monarchian nature of the Trinity, but the divine headship (رئاسة) of the Father over the Son and the Spirit is not subordinating. The relational understanding of the Trinity is illustrated by the terms that precisely and univocally describe their relational difference: the Father is the head who begot (والد), the Son is begotten (مولود), and the Spirit is the one who proceeds (منبثق).

Theodore Abū Qurra's analogies as presented above provide a set of terms required to correctly describe the Christian belief of the triune God. His denominational affiliation becomes visible in his selection of some terms that, on the one hand, are purely Arabic and, on the other, reflect the terminological legacy of the Greek-speaking Church Fathers. The following are the basic terms used by Theodore in his analogies: وجه، قنوم، لا اختلاف، طبيعة، رئيس، والد، مولود، منبثق.

C. ABŪ RĀ'ĪṬA AL-TAKRĪTĪ (D. C. 830)

The Jacobite theologian Abū Rā'īṭa, is the author of important works on the Trinity, in which analogy is privileged as a means for illustrating the mysteries of the Christian faith⁵⁰. His two works contain nine analogies, used by the author in his attempts to introduce various aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity. He uses, for the most part, parables that are already known, for example: the analogy of the three Lamps (twice); the analogy of the Sun (twice); the analogy of Adam, Eve, and Abel (twice); the psychological analogies of the Soul-Intellect-Speech; the analogy of the Five Senses-Body-Soul; and a new analogy, that of Sa'd and Ḥālīd.

1) THE FIRST RISĀLA: ON THE HOLY TRINITY

The analogy of the three lamps appears in the context of a long disputed issue on the unity and distinction that characterize the triune God. To

49) Cf. ABŪ QURRA, *Maymar fī wuḡūd*, p. 228.

50) ḤABĪB ABŪ RĀ'ĪṬA, *Risāla on the proof of the Christian religion and the proof of the Holy Trinity*, in Sandra Toenies KEATING, *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Islamic Period. The Apologies of Abū Rā'īṭa* (Brill, Leiden, 2006), pp. 83-145; ḤABĪB ABŪ RĀ'ĪṬA, *The first Risāla: On the Holy Trinity*, in Sandra Toenies KEATING, *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Islamic Period. The Apologies of Abū Rā'īṭa* (Brill, Leiden, 2006), pp. 165-215.

demonstrate the simultaneous union and distinction, Abū Rā'īṭa presents the analogy of the three lamps that are united in the nature of their lights yet remain distinct due to their own particularity. The analogy reads as follows:

We only describe [God] as unified in ousia (متفق في الجوهر) and distinct in the hypostaseis (مفارق في الأقانيم), and [God's] ousia is His hypostaseis (جوهره), and His hypostaseis are His ousia (واقانيمه هم جوهره), as (بمثلة) with the placement of three lights in one house. None of us think that we mean three lamps, rather, we mean their light, even though God, blessed is He, is above every analogy (قياس). For the lights are three and one – they are identical to each other. They are three because each one of them is self-subsistent (قائم بعينه) and enduring in its being, even if there is no obstruction in the space between it and the other lights, and [they are] one, because they are all united in light.

And the demonstration of this (that they are one and three [simultaneously]) is that each one of them is not the others in the proper state of its being (قوام ذاته). Because, were one of these lamps to be removed from the house, its light would be removed with it, and nothing of it would remain. [However,] when we briefly described the lights, which are above all of the senses and all knowledge, we are not compelled to describe each one of them as having a cause (علة). Rather, one of them is the cause (علة) of the other two, without beginning and without time (بلا بدى ولا زمان). And the two (والاثنين) are related (مضافان) to the one (الى الواحد) in a substantial, natural relation (اضافة جوهرية طباعية).⁵¹

The analogy is surrounded by theological statements about God, and its text is rich in theological vocabulary. Abū Rā'īṭa proposes a couple of new terms that he has decided to introduce into his teaching. The term جوهر, already promoted by Timothy I, remains the basic word for describing a common category that is shared by the three hypostaseis (اقانيم). Abū Rā'īṭa very clearly highlights the equivalence of these two realities, by saying that the unique substance is composed of three hypostases, and vice versa. God is said to be unified (متفق) in one aspect, and distinct (مفارق) in another.⁵²

Unlike his contemporary Abū Qurra, Abū Rā'īṭa uses, in all his works, a term derived from the Syriac اقانيم/اقنوم (rather than وجوه/وجه) to speak about

51) HABIB ABŪ RĀ'ĪṬA, *The first Risāla: On the Holy Trinity*, in Sandra Toenies KEATING, *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Islamic Period. The Apologies of Abū Rā'īṭa* (Brill, Leiden, 2006), pp. 185-187.

52) See Michal SADOWSKI, "The divine substance as *māsūra* and *muftaraqa*. An attempt of reinterpretation of the Trinitarian terminology in the light of the teaching of Abū Rā'īṭa's *al-Risāla fī l-thālūth al-muqaddas*", in CCO 11 (2014), pp. 161-188.

the hypostases, and another of Persian origin *جوهر* (rather than *طبيعة*), to deal with the substance. However, the author also proposes new terminology that becomes his own way of speaking about the divine hypostases. This is made evident in the analogy of the three lamps. The lights of the lamps are said to be self-subsistent (*قائم بعينه*), unmixed, and distinct because of their proper state of being as essence (*قوام ذاته*)⁵³. It appears that by using these terms the author intends to penetrate more deeply into the doctrinal nuances.

Apart from the well-known general terms, he proposes something more refined. "Self-subsistence" is an explanation of the very nature of a hypostasis, while the "proper state of being" or the "subsistence of essence" individualizes each hypostasis, constitutes its identity and its personality, and illustrates its relationality. The bishop of Tikrit goes further in his explanations and teaches about the "cause" of the lights. This term is analogous to the "source" or "principle" of the Trinity. In theological sense, the "cause" (*علة*), placed outside of time (*بلا بدى ولا زمان*), points to both the *continuity* of the Son's generation and the *atemporal* procession of the Spirit. The Son and the Spirit remain related (*مضافان*) to their *علة*, substantially and naturally (*جوهرية*), and this means that they share the substance of their *علة* and its nature.

2) ON THE PROOF OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE TRINITY⁵⁴

We now come to the analogy of the Sun. This metaphor is one of the most popular Trinitarian analogies. Abū Rā'īta describes the Sun with its oneness, multiplicity, and the origin of the basic solar elements.

It is not permissible for us to describe [the ousia] as a plurality, that is, as gods, but rather [only] as one, as we say about the Sun, for it is a being

53) An interesting comment on the distinction between the divine *ذات* and *عين* is found in EUTYCHIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, *The Book of the Demonstration*. He maintains that "God is not known *بعينه* or in His substance, but he is known *بذاته* in his works" (ليس يعرف الله بعينه وجوهه) (ولكنه يعرف بذاته من اعماله). The term's meaning is ambiguous and depends on the context. It may signify generally an essence as well as a particularity of an essence existing in an individual. Cf. EUTYCHIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, *Kitāb al-Burhān*, in Pierre CACHIA (ed.), *Eutychius of Alexandria - The Book of the Demonstration (Kitāb al-Burhān)*, CSCO, vol. 192, *Scriptores Arabici*, vol. 20 (Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, Louvain, 1960), p. 12; HADDAD, *La trinité*, pp. 167-168.

54) Full title in English: *A Risala of Abū Rā'īta l-Takrītī on the proof of the Christian religion and the proof of the Holy Trinity*; Sandra Toenies KEATING, "Abū Rā'īta l-Takrītī", in David THOMAS & Barbara ROGGERA (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History* (Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2009), vol. I, p. 571.

(ذات) of three existent individuals (ثلاثة اشخاص ذاتية) and [three] substantial attributes (وصفات جوهرية), without difference (بغير تباين) or separation (ولا افتراق) from their one ousia (من جوهرها). [It is] that which is called one sun because of its genuine existence and uniqueness in its singularity, a being (ذات), one ousia (جواهر واحد), comprehending three known properties (ثلاثة خواص), that is, the Sun disc which is described with two substantial attributes (الصفتين الجوهريتين), which are the light and the heat, since [the Sun] does not cease to be described with the two [attributes], in that it does not cease to generate (لم يزل والد) the light, [which is] generated (مولدا) simultaneously with the existence of the Sun disc from before time, without one of [the attributes] having existed prior to the other two.

This is the same with the heat: it proceeds (منبثقة) from [the sun disc] in the light generated from it (المولود منه) eternally (ازليا بازلته) and before time (قديما). The sun disc is not (ليس) the light and the light is not (لا) the heat, on account of the differentiation of the specific existence (بامتنياز الوجود الخاص) belonging to each one (the sun disc, the light and the heat). Rather, [it is] one ousia (طبع واحد), one nature (جواهر واحد), one power (وقدرة واحدة) and three properties (ثلاثة خواص), comprehended and known as one sun⁵⁵.

The analogy is placed in the context of the discussion on substance and the hypostases. The example of the Sun, as presented by this author, contains important theological terms. It is not by chance that Abū Rā'īṭa decides to use particular vocabulary, but as we have already seen, the selection and use of the terms is theologically justified. The Sun itself is a metaphor of God in the Trinity of divine persons. The terms used by the author may be divided in four groups: 1) terms concerning the oneness, 2) those expressing the multiplicity (threeness), 3) giving additional clarifications, and 4) dealing with the origin.

In the first group of the terms, Abū Rā'īṭa follows both the Syriac tradition, already represented by Timothy, and the Greek influence, adopted by Abū Qurra. The oneness of God is described by terms such as: جوهر (substance, οὐσία), طبع⁵⁶ (nature, φύσις), ذات (quiddity, essence, φύσις)⁵⁷, and قدرة (power, δύναμις).

With respect to the Trinity's multiplicity or the threeness, Abū Rā'īṭa

55) HĀBĪB ABŪ RĀ'ĪṬA, *Risāla on the proof of the Christian religion and the proof of the Holy Trinity*, in Sandra Toenies KEATING, *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Islamic Period. The Apologies of Abū Rā'īṭa* (Brill, Leiden, 2006), p. 112.

56) Rare form.

57) Cf. HADDAD, *La trinité*, p. 164.

speaks about the three existent individuals (ثلاثة أشخاص ذاتية). This is a peculiar *novum* that appears in the analogies of this author, in contrast to his predecessors. The individuals - أشخاص⁵⁸ -, seen by this analogy in the Sun's disc, heat, and light, belong to the common essence (ذات). They are synonymous with the substantial attributes (صفات جوهرية)⁵⁹ and the properties (خواص).

The third group adds information concerning the three substantial attributes: there are three attributes without difference (بغير تباين) and separation (ولا افتراق) from the common substance. The existence of the substantial attributes (or properties) is then described as necessary, constitutive, and inalienable. They belong to the Sun unceasingly (لم تزل); the Sun does not stop generating the light (لم يزل والد) that is simultaneous with the Sun's existence. The heat is also proceeding (منبثقة) eternally (أزليا) from the Sun in the light generated (المولود). Abū Rā'īṭa clearly emphasizes the *distinction* between the attributes of the Sun that is guaranteed by the distinction of each one's particular existence (بامتياز الوجود الخاص).

The last group of terms focuses on the issue of the origin of the Sun's attributes, and implicitly speaks about the divine hypostases. The author is consistent in the use of his terminology; the light is generated (مولدا), and the heat is said to be proceeding (منبثقة).

As presented in the two analogies, Abū Rā'īṭa uses his theological terminology consistently. The metaphors abound in (all) the terms that are necessary in the theological discussion on the Trinity. Moreover, he uses also some new vocabulary that is proper for his Trinitarian theology.

D. BUṬRUS IBN NAṢṬAS AL-BAYT RA'S (D. C. 940):

THE BOOK OF THE DEMONSTRATION

Butrus ibn Naṣṭas al-Bayt Ra's' *Kitāb al-Burhān* deals with many theological questions. An important part of it is dedicated to the dogma of the Trinity. Like the other Arabic-speaking theologians, the author uses some analogies that help him to illustrate the Christian belief in the triune God. Although *The Book of the Demonstration* (*Kitāb al-Burhān*) is an extensive

58) Singular: شخص, plural: اشخاص usually rendered by: *body, corporeal form, figure or substance of a man or some other object or thing*. In philosophical terminology, it also means: *individual, individuum*. Cf. Edward W. LANE, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Williams and Norgate, London, 1872), Book I, Part 4, p. 1517; Alexandre M. GOICHON, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā* (Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1938), p. 156.

59) Similar term (صفات ذاتية) already appears in Timothy's discussion with al-Mahdi.

work, it only contains three Trinitarian analogies.

The text presents two (split into three) Trinitarian analogies: the elaborate analogy (triad) of the word-reason-spirit, and a well-known analogy of the Sun, with some modifications intended to emphasize the relational character of its constitutive elements. The analogy of the Sun, quoted below, differs from the previous examples by its locus. The text is not placed in the midst of statements on the nature of God, but it follows the explanations concerning the cognition of God through both nature and analogy.

He created in the circle of heaven a single sun, with the unity of single light which fills the world with light and intermingles (تخالط)⁶⁰ with everything; yet no uncleanness reaches it from anything nor any defilement enter into the substance (جوهر) of its light from any of the material bodies with which it mingles.

He made it a single sun by unity of nature (بتوحيد الطبيعة), but threefold through clear aspects (مثلثة بجهات) known by properties (معرفة بخواص) which distinguish (تميز) between that trinity, and yet without separation or break (بلا فرقة منقطعة). It comprises a solar disc which begets (والدة) the rays and the solar beams which are begotten (مولود) from the disc, and the solar radiance which is sent (منبعث) from the disc and dwells (مستقر) in the beams.

These are three hypostases (فواصات ثلثة) with three aspects (بجهات ثلثة) and three forms (وراسمها ثلثة). There is no separation between them (ليس بينها فرقة), for the sun is one by the unity of its substance which conjoins the disc and the beams and the radiance. And it has three aspects known by the properties (خواص) of begetting (ولادة) in the disc, of begottenness (ولودة) in the beams, and of procession (انبعاث) in the radiance, without any intermingling of the trinity (بلا تخطيط للتثليث) or any separation of the unity (ولا فرقة للتوحيد). All that the disc has the beams have, except the begetting, and all that the beams have the disc has except the begottenness, and all that the radiance has the disc and the beams have except the procession⁶¹.

The content of this analogy is similar to that of those we have already read; however, the author presents it in accordance with his own theological profile. At first glance, the reader can notice that the vocabulary used by Buṭrus ibn Naṣṭas al-Bayt Ra's resembles that found in Abū Qurra. First of

60) Root: *h-l-l*, III form: to mix, to mingle, to blend.

61) EUTYCHIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, *The Book of the Demonstration*, in Pierre CACHIA (ed.), *Eutychius of Alexandria - The Book of the Demonstration (Kitāb al-Burhān)*, CSCO, vol. 193, *Scriptores Arabici*, vol. 21 (Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, Louvain, 1960), part I, p. 27 (n. 47). Cf. IOHANNES DAMASCENUS, *Expositio fidei* 1:2, in PG 94, 792C.

all, he highlights the unity of the Sun with its light, paralleling it with the unity of God. The oneness of the Sun (thus also of God) is everlasting, because its substance (جوهر) does not mingle with anything. It is also guaranteed by the unity of nature (بتوحيد الطبيعة) of the Sun itself and of its rays. The Sun appears in three aspects (مثلة بجهات), which are known by their properties (بخواص). As noted, Buṭrus ibn Naṣṭas al-Bayt Ra's introduces a new term: جهة, that probably corresponds to the Greek πρόσωπον, in its original meaning of *face*⁶². The properties that make the three aspects distinct (تميز) do not cause them to be separated nor broken (بلا فرقة منقطعة).

The terms used to designate these properties are not random. The author says that the solar disc is the begetter (والدة), that the solar beams are begotten (مولود), and that the radiance of the Sun is this what is sent (منبعث) from it. The three elements of the Sun are said to be the three hypostases (قوامات) ⁶³, with three aspects and three forms (وراسما ثلثة). Furthermore, the three properties (خواص) of the hypostases are set forth: begetting (ولادة), begottenness (ولودة), and emission (انبعاث)⁶⁴.

The author also uses a set of terms to highlight the unbroken relation between the hypostases. The quoted analogy speaks about their distinction (تميز) and lack of separation and break (بلا فرقة منقطعة، ليس بينها فرقة), but it also deals with the fact that they do not intermingle. There is yet another term worth noting. In speaking about the nature of the light, Buṭrus ibn Naṣṭas maintains that the radiance dwells (مستقر) in the beams⁶⁵. Transposed into the field of theology, the remark concerning the very nature of light seems to point clearly to the theological doctrine of perichoresis, i.e. the interpenetra-

62) جهة refers to way, mode, manner of acting. Edward W. LANE, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Williams and Norgate, London, 1893), Book I, Part 8, p. 3050. Another interpretation of the term suggests Awad. Cf. AWAD, *Orthodoxy*, pp. 212-228.

63) A term قوام is probably derived from قنوم and synonymous to the Greek word ὑποστάσις.

64) Cf. Avril Mary MAKHOLUF, "The Trinitarian Doctrine of Eutychius of Alexandria (877-940 A.D.)", *ParOr* 5 (1974), pp. 13-16. It is also said that the three aspects are known by the properties of each of the Sun's features. So, the disc is known by the property of begetting (ولادة), the beams by the property of begottenness (ولودة), and the radiance by the property of emission (انبعاث). Cf. EUTYCHIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, *The Book of the Demonstration*, in Pierre CACHIA (ed.), *Eutychius of Alexandria - The Book of the Demonstration (Kitāb al-Burhān)*, CSCO, vol. 193, *Scriptores Arabici*, vol. 21 (Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, Louvain, 1960), part I, pp. 33-34 (n. 47).

65) A term derived from the root q-r-r: to settle down, to dwell. Its theological connotation is justified by the use, in the same context, another three remarkably theological terms: منبعث, والدة, and مولود.

tion of the divine persons. Interestingly, in many places in his work, Buṭrus ibn Naṣṭas al-Bayṭ Ra's uses the term حلول when speaking about the indwelling of the divine nature of Christ in His human nature⁶⁶. This may explain why he uses yet another word: مستقر, for his Trinitarian theology.

E. YAHYĀ IBN 'ADĪ (893-974): *On the Validity of the Christian belief*⁶⁷

By the 10th century, the language of the theological treatises changed in general. The metaphorical expressions were replaced by a more philosophical style. This led to the decrease noted in the use of analogies by the Arab Christian theologians. Yahyā ibn 'Adī applies the following analogies in his three treatises on the Trinity⁶⁸: the analogy of two mirrors⁶⁹, the analogy of Zayd⁷⁰, and that of Zayd, 'Abd Allah, and Ḥalid⁷¹. It is worth noting that, with respect to the theological vocabulary, a significant role is also played by the Aristotelian triad *intellect, intelligent, and intelligible*⁷².

Ibn 'Adī's theological vocabulary differs from what we have studied so far. His Trinitarian analogies contain little theological terminology. An original teaching on the Trinity is found in his *On the validity of the Christian Belief*. This short work contains two of his most important and best devel-

66) Cf. EUTYCHIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, *Kitāb al-Burhān*, in Pierre CACHIA (ed.), *Eutychius of Alexandria - The Book of the Demonstration (Kitāb al-Burhān)*, CSCO, vol. 192, *Scriptores Arabici*, vol. 20 (Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, Louvain, 1960), part I, pp. 71 (n. 113), 82 (n. 133); 84 (n. 134); 88 (n. 144); 101 (n. 168); 108 (n. 182); 127 (n. 225); 146 (n. 263); 181 (n. 351); 213 (n. 396); EUTYCHIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, *Kitāb al-Burhān*, in Pierre CACHIA (ed.), *Eutychius of Alexandria - The Book of the Demonstration (Kitāb al-Burhān)*, CSCO vol. 209, *Scriptores Arabici* vol. 22 (Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, Louvain, 1961), part II, p. 2 (n. 404); 20-21 (n. 428).

67) The full title in English is: *Epistle on the validity of the belief of the Christians that the Creator is one substance endowed with three attributes*. Emilio PLATTI, "Yahyā ibn 'Adī", in David THOMAS & Alex MALLET (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History* (Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2010), vol. II, p. 419.

68) *Maqāla fī ṣiḥḥat i'tiqād al-Naṣārā fī l-Bārī* 'azza wa-ḡalla annahu ḡawhar wāḥid dū ṭalaṭ ṣifāt, *Maqāla fī tabyīn al-waḡḡ alladhī 'alayhi yaṣiḥḥ al-qawl fī l-Bārī* ḡalla wa-ta'ālā innahu ḡawhar wāḥid dū ṭalaṭ kawāṣṣ tusammihā l-Naṣārā aqānīm, and *Maqāla yatabayyanu fihā ḡalaṭ Abī Yūsuf ibn Ya'qūb ibn l-shāq al-Kindī fī l-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*.

69) IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqālah fī ṣiḥḥat*, pp. 12-13.

70) Yahyā IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqāla fī tabyīn al-waḡḡ alladhī 'alayhi yaṣiḥḥ al-qawl fī l-Bārī* ḡalla wa-ta'ālā innahu ḡawhar wāḥid dū ṭalaṭ kawāṣṣ tusammihā l-Naṣārā aqānīm, in Augustin PÉRIER, *Petits traités apologétiques de Yahyā ben 'Adī* (J. Gabalda Éditeur, Paris, 1920), pp. 48-49.

71) Yahyā IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqālah yatabayyanu fihā ḡalaṭ Abī Yūsuf ibn Ya'qūb ibn l-shāq al-Kindī fī l-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, in *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 22 (1920-1921), p. 13.

72) IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqāla fī ṣiḥḥat*, pp. 18-19.

oped similes: the analogy of the two mirrors⁷³ and the *intellect-intelligent-intelligible triad*⁷⁴. Given the length of the analogy of the two mirrors, we cannot present it here in its entirety; we will therefore read only the essential fragment and briefly summarize it. With respect to its origin, the analogy of the two mirrors is perhaps modeled on some biblical texts, and its elements may be traced back to the theology of Severus' of Antioch (465-538)⁷⁵.

The analogy consists of two mirrors placed face to face. Each one bears the image of the other. The opposite mirror's reflected image resembles its material form. Each mirror produces its own image as reflected by the one facing it. The images of the one and of the other appear in the three modes of being⁷⁶ that differ from one another (لها ثلث أحوال كل واحدة منها غير الحالين الآخرين).

73) IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqāla fī ṣiḥḥat*, pp. 12-14.

74) On the Trinitarian doctrine of Yahyā ibn 'Adī read in Avril Mary MAKHLOUF, "The Trinitarian Doctrine of Yahyā Ibn 'Adī", *ParOr* 10 (1981), pp. 37-50.

75) Cf. SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH, *Letter LXV*, in Ernest W. BROOKS, "A Collection of Letters of Severus of Antioch From Numerous Syriac Manuscripts", *PO* 14 (1920), pp. 3-68.

76) Ibn 'Adī uses a term حال that renders the differences among the hypostases. The term is also found in Abū Rā'īta who applies an expression حال قوام that corresponds to the Greek concept of τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως or τρόπος τῆς ὑποστάσεως i.e. *mode of existence* or *subsistence*. However, in Arabic, the Greek term τρόπος is rendered rather by نحو. The word حال, which is translated by *mode*, suggests that Abū Rā'īta thinks about the mode (نحو) not in general categories but more specifically as a property that constitutes a *mode* of divine Being. Therefore, we find حال قوام as a *mode of existence* (or *subsistence*) of the essence (ذات) in each hypostasis. In Greek theology, the concept of τρόπος ὑπάρξεως was developed mainly by two Cappadocian Fathers, i.e. Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nyssa, for whom the term was only a part of the definition of person. According to both theologians, the difference between the modes, which are to be understood as individuating characteristics, do not imply the difference of substance they share. One may also suppose, that the "mode of existence/ὑπάρξις", as applied to the divine persons, may point to the origin of the Son, and the Spirit from their common source. For Theodoret of Cyrrhus, who adopted Basil's understanding of the concept, the subsistence does not designate a complete person, the properties (τὸ ἰδικόν) of the divine persons (πρόσωπον) do not present the substance (οὐσία), but they are the indicators of the subsistence (ὑποστάσις), and they mark out (διασημαίνειν) the mode of existence (τῆς ὑπάρξεως τρόπος). Cf. ḤABĪB ABŪ RĀ'ĪTA, *Al-risālat al-ūlā fī l-Ṭālūt al-muqaddas*, in Sandra Toenies KEATING, *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Islamic Period. The Apologies of Abū Rā'īta* (Brill, Leiden, 2006), p. 194; GREGORIUS NYSSENIUS, *Contra Eunomium*, in Werner JAEGER, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (Leiden, 1960), 1.216; 1.496-497; 3.2.42; BASILIUS CAESARENSIS, *Adversus Eunomium* 5, in PG 29, 680A, 681C; Sidney GRIF-FITH, "Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidmah Abū Rā'ītah, a Christian mutakallim of the First Abbasid Century", *Oriens Christianus* 64 (1980), p. 185; Louis GARDET, "Hāl", in Bernard LEWIS — al., *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Brill, Leiden, 1986), vol. III, pp. 83-84; George L. PRESTIGE, *God in Patristic Thought* (London, 1952), p. 245; Lucian TURCESCU, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005), pp. 103-106; Vasillije VRANIĆ, *The Constancy and Development in the Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus* (Brill, Leiden, 2015), p. 93; Vasillije VRANIĆ, "The Cappadocian Theological Lexis in the Expositio

The first mode is that of the image reflected in the first mirror, which is the cause (سبب) of the existence of the other two modes (الحال سبب وجود الصورة). The second mode is concerned with the image of the first mirror reflected in the opposite mirror, while the third mode is found in the first mirror, which reflects the image coming from the opposite mirror.

This technical description of the reflection is further enriched by a theological interpretation. According to ibn 'Adī, the first mode described above resembles (يمثل) in existence (لوجود) the Father, who is the cause (علّة)⁷⁷ of the Son and of the Spirit. The second mode, which is proper of the image found in the opposite mirror, is said to resemble the Spirit, who is sent and derived (منبعثا خارجا) from the Father. Finally, the third mode, found in the image that appears in the first mirror, is proper to the Son, because he resembles the Father in two respects: he is his figure (في الصورة) and his existence remains in the Father's essence (وجوده في ذات الأب وغير خارج). The three modes are said to be the three attributes (الثلاث الصفات) or three subjects (ثلاث موضوعات), each with a distinct reality (معنى)⁷⁸. Each reality (معنى) - a new term introduced by

rectae fidei of Theodoret of Cyrrhus", *Philotheos* 14 (2014), pp. 133-136.

⁷⁷ Yahya ibn 'Adī makes an intentional use of two terms related to two different concepts of the cause. As Richard Frank maintains, the term سبب was used in the *kalām* to designate the element in a chain of causes that leads from some initial act to a resulting event in another subject than that in which the sequence was initiated. Meanwhile علّة denotes the direct or primary determinant cause that produces the effect in an immediate and necessary way without any other casual factor. Cf. Richard FRANK, "Al-Ma'nā: some reflections on the technical meanings of the term in the *kalām* and its use in the physics of Mu'ammār", in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 87 (1967), p. 251; Richard FRANK, *Beings and their attributes. The Teaching of the Bastian School of the Mu'tazila in the Classical Period* (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1978), pp. 112-113.

⁷⁸ In his triad of *intellect-intelligent-intelligible*, ibn 'Adī maintains that the reality of the intellect does not imply (وَأَنَّ معنى عقل لا يضمن معنى أنه عاقل ولا أنه معقول) the other two realities; it is different (غير) from them, but all the three معاني belong to the same essence (ذات) or substance (جوهر). The divine substance (جوهر) is one and undivided but yet described by the three realities (معاني), properties (خواص), and attributes (صفات). Regarding the historic use of the term in the Islamic circles, it is worth noting Mu'ammār ibn 'Abbād al-Sulamī (d. 830) for whom معنى represents the principle of individuation of one substance from another. Frank suggests understanding معنى as "an intrinsic, determinant cause of some real aspect of the being of the subject". For Wolfson, معنى is synonymous to the Greek πράγμα (thing), while Yahya ibn 'Adī interprets معنى as "an existing thing", "an existential and essential reality", or as this what "designs the definition of a thing", "a substance that has a certain definition", and as "a reality" that defines the Divine hypostasis (معنى كل قنوم منها من حيث هو قنوم). (غير معنى القنومين الآخرين). However, it is not to be identified with the substance (*ḡawhar*) as such. Cf. YAḤYĀ IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqāla fī ṣiḥhat*, pp. 18-19; YAḤYĀ IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqāla fī tabyīn al-waḡh allagḥ 'alayhi yaṣiḥḥ al-qawl fī l-Bārī* ḡalla wa-ta'ālā innahu ḡawhar wāhid dū talaḥ ḥawāṣṣ tusammihā l-Naṣārā aqānīm, p. 55; Harry A. WOLFSON, "The Muslim Attributes and the Christian Trinity", in *Harvard Theological Review* 49 (1956), pp. 4-5; Jamel-E.

ibn 'Adī to the Trinitarian theology - is individualized by the mode (حال), and is close in meaning to اقنوم⁷⁹.

The reality (معني) is, thus, a thing that truly exists; it is what expresses the definition of each image and makes them different (غير), but yet united. This way of exposition is important because of its theological approach. The Father is confirmed as the principle of the Son and of the Spirit. The latter is said to come from the Father by his procession from him. The Son, conversely, remains in the Father and is his own image (εἰκὼν, الصورة)⁸⁰. This detail may also point, though implicitly, to the doctrine on the Trinitarian perichoresis. The analogy of the mirrors presents a new way of speaking about the Trinity. In this case, Ibn 'Adī avoids using well-known terms like اقنوم, and choses instead to deal with the modes (الأحوال) that are defined and individualize a proper reality (معني). He recognizes the Father, who is the principle of the Trinity, and speaks about the particular emission of the Spirit (منبعث), as a way of origin (خارج) different from the Son's (غير خارج)⁸¹.

F. 'ABDALLAH IBN AL-ṬAYYIB (D. 1043):

Treatise on the Trinity and the Unity

This 11th-century Nestorian philosopher and physician wrote some short works for the clarification of the doctrine on the Trinity⁸². His texts contain few analogies and only his analogy of Zayd will be presented here.

This short treatise was perhaps the development of a shorter text (*Maqālah fī l-taṭlīl*). Gérard Troupeau divided it into ten sections that deal

BENCHEIKH, "Ma'nā", in Clifford E. BOSWORTH, E. von DONZEL, Bernard LEWIS, Charles PELLAT, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Brill, Leiden, 1991), vol. 6, p. 347; Richard FRANK, "Al-Ma'nā: Some Reflections on the Technical Meanings of the Term in the Kalām and its use in the Physics of Mu'ammar", in *Journal of American Oriental Society* 87 (1967), p. 252; HADDAD, *La trinité*, pp. 168-169; Emilio PLATTI, *Yahyā ibn 'Adī. Théologien chrétien et philosophe arabe. Sa théologie de l'Incarnation* (Département Orientalistik, Leuven, 1983), pp. 80-84.

79) "And one should not doubt also that the reality (معني) of each one of the three modes (الأحوال) is different (غير) from the reality of the other two. The reality that is existing in a [polished] metal differs from the reality that is in the image reflected (منعطفة) from the opposite mirror to the first one, and the reality of the image that is proceeding to the opposite mirror, reflected from it, until it reaches [the first mirror], is yet different reality from the other two": IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqāla fī ṣiḥḥat*, pp. 16-17.

80) Cf. Jn 14:10 and Col 1:15.

81) Cf. IBN 'ADĪ, *Maqāla fī ṣiḥḥat*, p. 21.

82) To mention such treatises as: IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fī l-taṭlīl*, pp. 71-89; IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fī l-taṭlīl wa-l-tawḥīd*, pp. 105-123.

with crucial themes of Christian theology, such as the oneness of the divine essence and the multiplicity of the hypostases; the threeness of the divine attributes and their proper understanding in theological discourse. The analogy of Zayd is situated at the beginning of the treatise, where the focus is on the issue of the oneness and multiplicity in God.

There is a similar thing in the world. For Zayd, who is numerically one (وهو واحد بالعدد), has three modes (ثلاث أحوال) [of existence]: whiteness, writing, and geometry. So his essence is one (فداته واحدة), and this is the individual (الشخص) who receives these modes (الأحوال), and the attributes existing in him are three (وصفاته الموجودة فيه ثلاث). If his essence (داته) was to be taken from each of his attributes, then the entity (الجملة) being formed by the essence and the attribute would have been different (غير) from the entity being formed of the same essence and other attributes. Thus the reality (معنى) of white is not the reality of geometrician, who is Zayd⁸³.

The author begins the treatise by explaining the basic terms of theological reasoning: substance, attributes, and hypostasis. The divine substance is said to be the Creator's essence, which is one (الذي ذات الباري التي) والجوهر يشار به الى ذات الباري التي (قد بان أنها واحدة). The attributes (صفات), on the other hand, are the realities (معان) that exist in the essence; but they are not the essence, which subsists on its own (والصفات يشار بها الى معان موجودة لهذه الذات ولا ذات قائمة بنفسها)⁸⁴. The attributes, called also "realities" (معان), are defined as: paternity (أبوة), sonship (بنوة), and emission (انبعاث)⁸⁵. His analogy also defines اقنوم that is

83) IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fi l-taṭlīl wa-l-tawhīd*, p. 109.

84) Cf. IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fi l-taṭlīl wa-l-tawhīd*, p. 109.

85) On one hand معنى is identified with صفة, but on the other, the *kalām* considered it to be an immediate, intrinsic casual determinant; معنى of paternity may be considered the immediate cause for the first hypostasis of the Trinity to be called the Father. Similarly, معنى of sonship as a cause of the second hypostasis to be called the Son, and معنى of procession as a cause of the third hypostasis to be called the Spirit. Similar understanding of the function of معنى is evident in ibn al-Ṭayyib's analogy of Socrates who is said to be white, warm, and wise because of different realities perceived in him (فان سقراط إذا أخذ مع معنى الحرارة الموجودة فيه قيل انه حار وإذا أخذ مع معنى العلم الموجود فيه قيل انه عالم). Another approach to the issue of three attributes (or properties) of the divine hypostases worth noting is presented by the author in his short treatise entitled in Arabic *Maqāla muḥṭasariha fi l-aqānīm wa ḡawhari wa 'an al-fi'l li-l-ḡawhari* where, instead of the realities (معنى), the author speaks about the three acts (*fi'l*) of the substance that belong to it (وينسب العمل بالخصوص على كل واحد من الاقنوم على سبيل المناسبة). (لذلك الاقنوم بان تكون الذات فعلت بذلك الخصوص). See Gérard TROUPEAU, "Le traité sur les hypostases et la substance de 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṭayyib", in J.M. BARRAL (ed.), *Orientalia Hispanica sive studia F. M. Pareja octogenario dicata*, Leiden, 1974, vol. I, p. 641; IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fi l-taṭlīl*, p. 83; Richard FRANK, "Al-Ma'nā: Some Reflections on the Technical Meanings of the Term in the Kalām and its use in the Physics of Mu'ammār", in *Journal of American Oriental Society* 87 (1967), pp. 252-253.

conceived as a combination of ذات with each of صفات.

The analogy of Zayd follows the theological introduction to the substance and the attributes, but its text appears to be distinct from the doctrinal notion presented in the preceding section, primarily because of the absence of the terminology introduced there. Moreover, the vocabulary in this text repeats the language already encountered in ibn 'Adī's exposition.

Ibn al-Ṭayyib presents an analogy that is short, concise, and relatively easy to understand. There are two groups of expressions that refer either to the substance or to the hypostasis. With respect to former, Zayd is said to be numerically one (واحد بالعدد), his essence (ذات) is also one, and as such, he is considered a single individual (الشخص). The essence of individual has three modes (ثلاث احوال) that are also identified with his personal attributes (صفات), i.e. whiteness, writing, and geometry⁸⁶. None of them can exist independently. The two terms احوال and صفات used here to render the multiplicity are apparently synonymous. As for the term معي, it designates the three different and distinct realities found in Zayd. They are to be identified with hypostasis that is a combination of essence (ذات) and attribute (صفة)⁸⁷.

The examples of the Trinitarian analogies presented above, firstly demonstrated their supporting role in illustrating the mystery of the Trinity. Their diversity was inspired by both nature, which indeed has its revelatory function, and the Bible sheds light on the doctrine through different aspects and from different perspectives. It is evident that the analogies were not only restricted to illustrate such a fundamental, yet general, notion on the Trinity as the tri-unity, but what is more interesting, they were able to deal with much more theologically refined teaching such as relations or processions. Another point worthy of mentioning is the rich theological vocabulary which constitutes an indispensable part of these analogies.

CONCLUSIONS

In the table below, the terms found in analogies are grouped in four categories that reflect the viewpoints from which the divine being can be described. Each metaphor speaks about the Trinity, the threeness of its persons and the oneness of their divine nature. These aspects are expressed in the

⁸⁶ Ibn al-Ṭayyib, in his analogy of Socrates, uses yet another set of attributes, such as: white (ابيض), warm (حار), and knowing (عالم). Cf. IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fī l-taḥlīl*, p. 82.

⁸⁷ Cf. IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Maqāla fī l-taḥlīl wa-l-tawḥīd*, p. 118.

terms proper to each author. In most cases, the doctrine on the Trinity is also supported by expressions that refer to the relational character of the intra-Trinitarian life. The teaching on the relations is, in fact, crucial for the Christian belief in the Triune God, since it attempts to answer a very fundamental question: *How* or *why* is God three, while nevertheless *remaining* one? As shown above, the theologians do not neglect, in their symbolical language, the core of their theological thought, which is not only pictured, but also expressed in terms that, in their significance, are unique and irreplaceable.

Author	threeness	distinction	sameness	oneness
Timothy	أسماء أقانيم صفات ذاتية	غير الآخر مولود منبثق انبثاق تنبعث	لا انفصال	جوهر
Abū Qurra	وجوه قنوم	غير صاحبه والد ولادة مولود انبثاق منبثق	لا اختلاف ليس خلاف	طبيعة
Abū Rā'īṭa	اقانيم قائم بعينه اشخاص ذاتية خواص صفات الجوهرية	علة والد مولود منبثقة مضافان قوام ذاته مفارق بامتياز الوجود الخاص	يغير تباين ولا افتراق اضافة جوهرية طباعية متفق	جوهر ذات طبع
Ibn Nāṣṭas	جهات خواص قوامات	تميز والدة ولادة	بلا فرقة منقطعة مستقر ليس بينها فرقة	جوهر طبيعة

	موراسما	مولود ولودة منبعث انبعاث بلا تخليط	لا فوقة	
Ibn 'Adī	موضوعات صفات	معنى غير سبب علة أحوال منبعثا خارجا غير خارج		ذات
Ibn al-Tayyib	صفات أحوال شخص	غير		ذات

Table 2. Theological terminology transmitted by the analogies.

As noted in the introduction, the paper is an attempt to evaluate the contribution that the Trinitarian analogies made in the diffusion of Christian theological terminology in Arabic. This was not an easy task because of differences between the texts. As we saw in 2.1 and 2.2, not all analogies presented here are closely linked to the doctrinal notion that plays an important supportive role with respect to the terminology. The study has shown that the more closely an analogy is related to the doctrinal notion, the more theological terms penetrate it. The metaphors that are presented in this paper were selected from among forty analogies that appear in the writings of these Arab theologians. Although most of them do not contain theological terms, twelve of them are indeed important for our study.

With respect to the structure, the form of the analogies dated back to the 8th and the 9th centuries is characteristically simple and concise. It can be assumed that, as long as they were kept in this form, they were visual expressions that could be easily learned by heart and repeated by the faithful. This was of great importance for the knowledge people had of the fundamental principles of the faith they professed. Given that the apologetical

treatises were composed to strengthen the faith of the faithful, the metaphors were also very helpful in for the defense of the faith in the new religious context. From the 10th century on, the role played by the analogies in theological discourse on the Trinity noticeably decreased, in terms of their number and terminological saturation.

As Table 2 shows, the Trinitarian analogies contained many specialized terminology, proper for the theological discourse on the Trinity. As the symbolical language played an important role in presentation of the doctrinal nuances, the metaphors also became a great means for conveying Christian theological language, which, in the 8th century and the beginning of the 9th century, was in its formative period. The terms presented above describe the Trinity from various angles. They refer not only to such general concepts as substance or hypostasis but also concern such refined and fundamental for theological reflection issues, like intra-Trinitarian processions, relations and based on them reciprocal distinctions. Such a composition of easy-to-learn images, with proper terminology, helped to spread it to the larger Christian audience.

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